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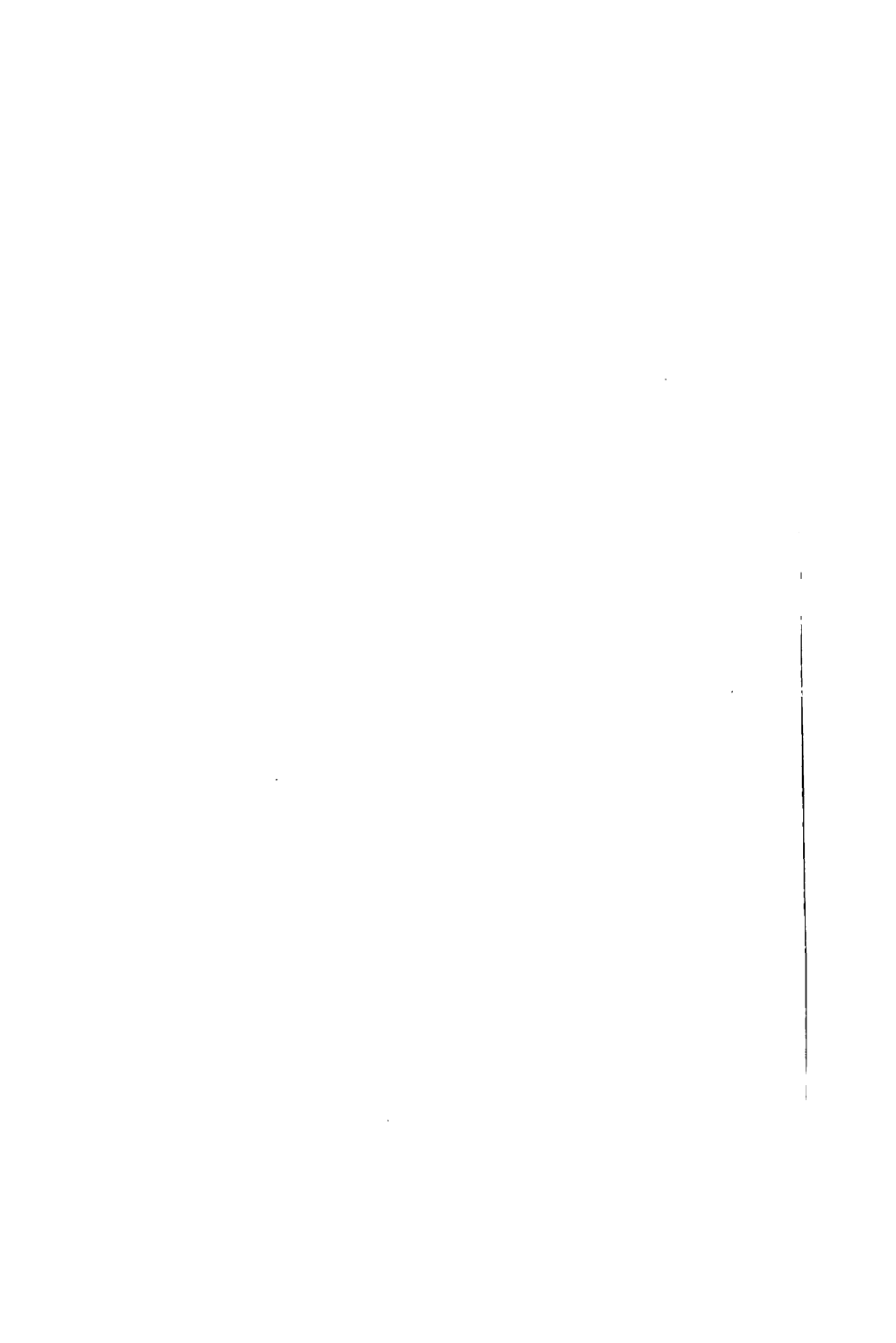
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AT THE TOMB

*"I go my way to him that sent me: and none of you asketh me,
whither goest thou?but sorrow hath filled your heart."*

John 16; 5, 6.



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TOWARD A BETTER WORLD

"Whither I go ye know, and the way ye know." John 18; 4.

BIBLE ETCHINGS OF IMMORTALITY

BY

Macmache
CAMDEN M. COBERN, D. D.
Author of "The Stars and the Book," etc.



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To
MY MOTHER AND DEAREST FRIEND
both of whom
have recently left the planet on a long expected
and much needed journey for
REST, RECREATION AND STUDY.

fr.
Mrs. Robert Stanley
626-42
=

"A great etching is the product of a grandly constituted mind; every stroke of it has value exactly proportionate to the mental capacity of the artist. . . . I know not how many roses are needed for one small phial of precious attar, but I know that there rises from every good etching such a perfume of concentrated thought that a million flowers must have bloomed for it in the garden of some fertile and cultivated mind."—*Philip Gilbert Hamerton.*

"Know ye what etching is?
'Tis Homer in a nutshell, ten commandments
Writ on a penny's surface; 'tis a wish,
A sigh, comprised in finely-chiseled odes,
A little image in its bird's-flight caught."
—*C. Vosmaer.*

WHEN I AWAKE.

MRS. CAMDEN M. COBERN.

Let flowers be breaking through the sod
To kiss the place where Spring has trod,
When I awake from dreams of God.

Let not an angel song be heard;
Let not the vibrant air be stirred
By trumpet shock or spoken word.

Let Nature's subtle minstrelsy,
With flutes of reed and grasses, be
The resurrection call to me.

Then let the bluebells peal and swing;
Let trumpet flowers like clarions ring,
To welcome life's eternal Spring.

BIBLE ETCHINGS OF IMMORTALITY.

"Thou wilt not leave us in the dust;
Thou madest man, he knows not why;
He thinks he was not made to die
And Thou hast made him—Thou art just."

—*Tennyson.*

"Are there not, Festus, are there not dear Michael,
Two points in the adventure of the diver—
One when—a beggar—he prepares to plunge?
One when—a prince—he rises with his pearl?"

—*Browning.*

The Bible is a temple whose sculptured walls and fretted vaults are covered with Masterpieces of Sacred Art.

These Bible artists are the Old Masters. The Samuel of Sir Joshua Reynolds, the David of Guercino, the Elijah of Poussin, the Daniel of Riviere, the St. Stephen of Fra Bartolome are but faint reproductions of their inimitable originals. Even Angelo's Moses is only a cold imitation, while Fra Angelica is but a copyist of the heavenly painter of Patmos.

These pictures, gathered from the rocky ledges of Sinai and the deserts of Arabia and

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the green pastures of Bethlehem, from the complicated glooms of the Mountains of Lebanon and the twilight mysteries of the Garden of Olives, can never be copied perfectly by trembling human fingers.

We see here, as in no other art gallery, ancient or modern, the hopes and struggles and soul-conquests of humanity—not of kings only, but of poor men, too. The greatest hero of these Old Masters was One who had not where to lay His head; their favorite subject, the sufferings of a slave people, “bound in affliction and iron”; their most honored names, David, the keeper of sheep, and Amos, gatherer of sycamore fruit, and Simon the tanner, and Saul the artisan, and Samuel, the servant boy in the temple, and Joshua, the servant of Moses, and Ebed-Melech, the black man who helped the prophet Jeremiah out of the dungeon, and Simon the Cyrenean, that other black man who helped Jesus carry his cross to Calvary, and Lazarus, begging at the rich man’s gate, and Ruth and Naomi, coming in loneliness and poverty from Moab, and the poor nameless widow with her almost empty cruse of oil, “gathering two sticks” that she might bake her last cake for

her sick boy from the "handful of meal" in the barrel.

These ancient Bible painters seemed to have perfect sympathy with every human need and human sorrow. Abraham, looking out from his tent door and then stepping forth "not knowing whither he went"; Joseph, suffering pitiless injustice in prison and palace; Job, though of alien race, in his vast agony of temptation; the Shunamite bereaved of her only son, standing with hot, tearless, beseeching eyes close to the prophet and swearing, "As the Lord liveth I will not leave thee"; the little "Sharon rose" with "dove's eyes," dreaming of her betrothed, who is feeding his sheep in the mountains of myrrh; the children playing in the market and shouting Hosannas in the temple; the ragged and famished wanderer coming back to his father's door, the sparrow fluttering to the ground with broken wing, the bleat of the lost sheep on the hills—the Bible is full of vivid pictures such as these drawn to the life with loving touch.

These are pictures which have become the world's property, masterpieces of artistic beauty, symbolic of divine mysteries.

It is noticeable, however, that there are

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few colorists among these Old Masters. These Rembrandts and Turners, these Raphaels and Titians did not depend upon color for their effects. Most of these unrivalled productions are mere etchings or outlines in brown and white. This is particularly true when these artists delineate the future world. Such pictures are few and divinely self-restrained. This is startlingly different from the gorgeous paintings of the Future Life which have reached us out of the past from all other nations.

EARLY HEATHEN PICTURES OF A FUTURE WORLD.

"He that hath found some fledged bird's nest may
know
At first sight if the bird be flown;
But what fair dell or grove he sings in now,
That is to him unknown."

—*Henry Vaughn.*

The most horrible pictures—to which those of Dante's "Inferno" seem like angel dreams—are those drawn on the leaves of old Egyptian books by men who were contemporaries of Moses, and who were trying to represent there the dreadful, the appalling horrors that every man who went out of this life must face

before he could enter the "Blessed Land" in peace.

The neighbors of the Hebrews—the Egyptians, the Babylonians, the Phoenicians—all believed in an immortality, shadowy though it was, but they believed that between the grave and the celestial mountains the soul had awful battles to fight with serpents and dragons and other monsters indescribably fearful; and most of the religious energy of these nations was swallowed up in the attempt to make a trustworthy chart of the journey between earth and heaven, and the foes lying in wait along the way.

The Egyptian thought only of the tomb. Every religious text was to help him get out of the grave, to help him in his desperate fight toward his shadowy immortality.

There is not a word of this in the Old Testament. No such ghastly picture of the future life, no such warding against demons, no such covering oneself with charms and filling the grave with protecting texts.

Why? Because they had no faith in a Future Life?

No, but because they had a superb faith in a Future Life. It is not the lack of faith, but the excess of it, which makes this vast

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difference between these Scriptures and all other ancient records. The silence of the Old Testament on these points is very suggestive.

I do not doubt that those ancient Hebrews thought that there was a journey necessary between this world and the next, and they may have pictured it as a frightful one, and the end of it lying in darkness and cold; but added to that old thought inherited from heathendom was a new thought—the thought of God, merciful and gracious, here and yonder, now and evermore, abundant in loving kindness and truth. (Ex. xxxiv.)

When they came to see God, that revelation was so glorious that it destroyed the horrors of the way. So glorious did He seem that in the eyes of Patriarchs and Prophets He was their great reward, here and hereafter. (Gen. xv: 1.)

I.

THE OLD HEBREW ARTISTS.

"Here sits he shaping wings to fly;
His heart forbodes a mystery;
He names the name—Eternity."

—*Tennyson.*

Come, then, in thought, if that alone may be,
O friend! and bring with thee
Thy calm assurance of transcendent Spheres
And the Eternal Years!"

—*Whittier.*

The future life was not denied by these ancient Hebrew seers, as some have hastily claimed; it was simply overshadowed by the consciousness of the living actual presence of a living God. There was no need to speculate what was beyond, since He was there. They did not picture the path, they did not need to see the path since He, the living God and the God of the living was there.

This meets us in the first etching in this old religious Art Gallery. It is only a stroke, but only the hand of a master—a spiritual Michael Angelo—could ever have drawn it.

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"And Enoch walked with God. And he was not, for God took him." (Gen. v:24.). O blessed word falling out of the silent millenniums of the far away past!

Enoch walked with God. What tremendous grasp of truth, which is still new to the world, the man must have had who painted that picture. Enoch walked with God. That means friendship, communion, comradeship.

Yes, yes, and it does not end with death, for the everliving God would not let the man with whom he loved to walk and talk be separated from him. "And he was not for God took him." God took him! Only three words, but they are worth more than all the pictures of the future life ever drawn by the hand of uninspired humanity.

God wanted him and God took him; that was enough to know. It was not necessary for the Hebrew to lay out the topography of the unseen and hard path to the New Life, for God took him and God knew the way. There was no need of charms and amulets for the journey, for God took him, and the Almighty would not be troubled by any danger in the path. There was no need of killing any slaves to accompany him, or dogs or horses, for God took him and the journey

could not be lonely any more than it could be dangerous. The gracious and tender One—He took him and He would take care of him all the journey through. The everliving God could not let a man come to harm with whom He loved to walk.

You will notice that the chief beauty of every large picture of death and the future life in the Old Testament is to be found in this one—the earliest of all.

THE EARLIEST PASTORAL.

“ I go to prove my soul !
I see my way as birds their trackless way.
I shall arrive ! what time, what circuit first,
I ask not ; but unless God send His hail
Or blinding fireballs, sleet or stifling snow,
In some time, His good time, I shall arrive :
He guides me and the bird.”

—*Browning.*

The Psalmist adds to the above picture, but does not change it, in that great etching which we call the Twenty-third Psalm—perhaps the most wonderful of all the *chef d'oeuvres* in this ancient Hebrew Art Gallery.

In one part of the picture is a flock of sheep lying down in green pastures, and in the shade of great comforting rocks, on the

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banks of a cool river. Yonder crouching in their lairs are the wild beasts watching them with hungry eyes, and here is one crawling toward them with stealthy steps, but he stops and sniffs the air and retreats in shame, for the shepherd, club in hand, is guarding his sheep. And yonder is a weak bleating lamb making his first journey, perhaps trying to follow his mother across the stream—and now it falls over the river bank almost into the deep still waters, but the shepherd hears the trembling cry for help quicker even than the mother, and with his crook (his “rod”) he draws it to him and takes it in his arms, and carries it safely across and lays it down by its mother’s side.

And now the storm is gathering and the still waters begin to heave; the wind howls and the darkness of night is near.

Where are the sheep? What will they do now?

The sheep! Why, there is not one to be seen, but the shepherd is standing outside the sheepfold listening and calling; and now we see him hurry to the thicket and lift up a little lamb that is caught there—the last of all the flock to find safety—and he puts it in his bosom and carries it in from the dark

and cold night into the warm and happy sheepfold.

That is one side of the picture and the other is the companion piece, where a man is dying. Darkness is coming on and the storm seems close at hand and the wild beasts are coming out of their dens and the journey seems long and the pathway grim. He lifts himself upon his elbow and looks out at the shepherd with his flock, and a smile of content gathers on his lips as he whispers, "The Lord is my shepherd. I shall not want. Yea, though I walk through the shadows I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me." Ah, blessed be God, no man need ask for any better hope than that. It is not simply that God will be with him, but God is with him. The companion of his lonely life journey is still here, with his staff of power and his protecting rod in his hand.

What a comfort that is! No wonder the shout is on his lips: "No fearful thing can harm me now, for He is with me, therefore can I enter with joy on the long journey fearing no evil."

And what now? Did you never notice that there was a third division to that picture? Not simply the man starting on his long jour-

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ney through the shadowy valley, and fearing no evil, but the inspired artist has with a few lines etched out for us his reception at the end of his journey. The painter's hand works so rapidly we can hardly follow it, but we can see that we are at a feast now. No need any longer of the rod or staff; the journey is over. The only change which we can see is that somehow the sick man has become well on the road. He is able to eat now—the black valley is behind him and is forgotten. He is at the table in Jehovah's house.

We now can see where Enoch went when the Lord took him. The man so lately lying in the land of death is dining in the palace of the Creator of all Life; and that is not all, for he is the guest in whose honor the banquet is spread.

But even that is not all. O the wonder of it! "Thou preparest the table." Jehovah himself is waiting upon him!

"Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies." What can that mean? Does it not mean that he has not simply come through the dark valley in safety, but has taken prisoners on the road; his strongest enemy has been defeated and captured, and now in safety and triumph he can

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feast in the presence of Death and Hell, his chained and conquered foes.

What honor he receives from his royal host! No luxury is omitted. His head is anointed with the oil of gladness; his cup is filled to the brim and is running over. And that is not all, for he looks up and says, "I will never go away from this place; I will dwell in the house of my Lord forever, and Goodness and Mercy shall be my servants who shall follow me all the days of my life." O blessed pencil! Happy was the generation in which this artist lived.

HEAVEN'S NEW CALENDAR.

"Leave now for dogs and apes,
Man has forever."

—*Browning.*

"Is not the earth made from a fragment of the sun and man from a breath of the Infinite? Courage then!"—*Charles Wagner.*

How long is this new life of the future to last? The above picture does not tell us, but there are innumerable little etchings in this art gallery, just put there, seemingly, for the sake of answering this question.

Here is a faded picture of an old woman weaving. She has thrown her shuttle for the

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last time and with a sigh of relief ceases her day's work. The Prince of the house of David looked at that picture centuries and centuries ago, and then seized his pencil and wrote beneath it, "Our days here are as a weaver's shuttle." "A thousand years in Thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past."

Here is another etching. A little child falls asleep, and the father and mother look upon her as she rests with her little dewey hand under her sweet, flushed face. She smiles in her sleep and murmurs, "Mama," and the father of the child thousands of years ago wrote under that picture, "Our days are as a dream in the night, but He will show us the path of life."

Before us is a wedding scene. The story teller amuses the company with his riddles and instructs them with his wise maxims and the guests laugh and weep as they listen; and then it comes to an end. They say good-bye to the host and start for home, the tale being almost forgotten in the home-going. But the royal psalmist watches them depart and draws a picture of it and writes beneath it, "We bring our years to an end as a tale that is told; it is soon gone and we fly away."

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The chronology of heaven is unlike that of earth. The Old Testament seers knew that. They said this lifetime of three score years and ten was but as a dream in the night and a dozen such lifetimes but as a day yonder. (Psa. xc:4.) St. Paul taught that the entire Old Testament history from Adam to John the Baptist was but as "yesterday." (Heb. xiii:8.) If the Yesterday be so long, what will the To-morrow be? Let the oldest Archangel before the white throne of the Eternal answer: "I do not know. It is still morning here. I have never seen even one setting sun. We do not know in Heaven what night is."

And in this home-coming who shall be there? Let us enter another room of this biblical art gallery.

FADED OR FORGOTTEN PICTURES.

"When a soul has seen
By the means of Evil that Good is best,
And, through earth and its noise, what is heaven's
serene,
When our faith in the same has stood the test—
Why, the child grown man, you burn the rod,
The uses of labour are surely done;
There remaineth a rest for the people of God;
And I have had troubles enough, for one."

—Robert Browning.

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Here in one corner hangs a little picture blurred and despised. It may be that no one has ever noticed it very carefully. There are so many great pictures in this matchless collection that it should be no surprise if every observer can discover a new masterpiece, hitherto overlooked. This is a picture of a great sufferer. He is not a Hebrew, though the picture hangs in a Hebrew gallery. What a lofty spirit this artist displayed who in that most ancient time could reach out beyond his own race and nation and land, and select a man of a strange people to be held up as the ideal of faith and patience to the whole Hebrew race and to all the world.

This is the portrait of a stranger of another nation, living outside the Holy Land; yet one whom God loves and cares for, and of whose righteousness Jehovah makes His boast. This man is pictured here as very rich, yet as a saint; so saintly that the news of his saintliness not only reached to heaven—that may not be so strange—but even reached to the lower world and disturbed it. We see all Hell troubled because of it; for there is nothing that the Devil and his angels fear and hate more than a saintly man, especially

if he continues saintly under hard circumstances.

A challenge is sent by Satan to Jehovah: "Doth Job fear God for naught? Hast Thou made a hedge about him, and about his house and about all that he hath? Only let me touch him once and You will see that he will curse Thee to Thy face." And God said, "Touch him. Let every one look!" And though Job did not know it, every angel in heaven and every demon in the lowest abyss were looking in breathless suspense to see which was the stronger, a man clothed with faith in God, or the Devil with all the powers of Hell behind him.

The battle is shown here—that part of the picture is very plain. His property is swept away, his children killed, his friends turned to mocking enemies, he himself covered with putrid sores, and, worse than all, his wife tells him to his face she too wishes he were dead. (Job ii:9.)

But there is one part of this picture which is seldom seen, covered as it is with the dust of ages. It is the closing scene. His faithfulness is receiving its reward; "the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before." (Job xlii: 10.) Originally he had seven thou-

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sand sheep and three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen and five hundred she asses, while in his house he was blessed with seven sons and three daughters. But yonder on the hills may now be counted fourteen thousand sheep and six thousand camels, and here in the valley are a thousand yoke of oxen and a thousand she asses. (Job xlii: 12.)

And how many children has he now? "He had also seven sons and three daughters." (Job xlii: 13.) But how can that be? Was he not promised "twice as much" of everything as he had in the beginning, and do not the Scriptures especially mention his sons and daughters as included in this reckoning?

Is that the failure of the promise of God? Was the inspired writer wrong when he said "the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before?" No! The teaching is that the children he had lost were still his. The seven boys and three girls were still alive and were yet his own. The three thousand camels died and he has six thousand now; the seven thousand sheep died and he has fourteen thousand now; but the seven sons and three daughters which died are still counted in

Job's family and he has "twice as many" as he had before—ten here and ten yonder!

A HEAVENLY DEW OF LIGHTS.

"Tears are the dew on the flower of the skies called hope. Weep, my son, but hope, dare to hope. Hoping is the finest sort of courage, and you can never have enough of it. It is not possible to expect too much of God; every anticipation will be infinitely surpassed."—*Charles Wagner*.

"What is holiest below
Must forever live and grow."
—*Miss Larcom*.

There is no painting of heaven in the Old Testament. I do not think the Old Testament writers ever received a vision of the future life. But they had a faith in a Living God, and therefore had faith in an everlasting life, and occasionally, in these dim rough etchings by the Oldest Masters, we catch a glimpse of that Future Life and we see that it is a Land of Peace, where "the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest." (Job iii: 17.)

There are some few etchings of which only fragments remain. Here is one in which we can only make out a fortress and a palace and a vision of angels, but written underneath are

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the words, "Because thou hast made the Lord God thy refuge and fortress and habitation, therefore He shall give His angels charge over thee; with long life will I satisfy thee and show thee my salvation." (Psa. xci.)

Here is a bird's nest. The atmosphere looks gray and cold. A hawk flies above the helpless nestlings, but the mother bird stretches her loving wings across the crowded nest, and only a little bill appears here and there through her soft, protecting feathers. Upon the margin of this idyllic canvas is written, "He shall cover thee with His feathers and under His wings shalt thou trust." (Psa. xci:4.)

I do not know how the Hebrew prophets pictured the future life with God and the angels; I only know from the few little etchings they have left, that they thought of it as a safe place, a place of victory and rest.

Here is one from the pencil of Isaiah. It is a battle scene. The struggle seems to be going against the Chosen people, but now in the midst of the dust and tumult a horseman appears upon the mountains, his raiment so glorious that the moon is confounded and the sun is ashamed before him; and the Lord

of Hosts puts the enemy to flight; and below this symbolic picture is inscribed, "He will swallow up death in victory, and the Lord Jehovah will wipe away all tears from off all faces." And beneath both halves of the picture Isaiah has written, "Thy dead shall live. My dead body shall arise. Awake and sing, ye dwellers in the dust, for a dew of lights is thy dew, and the land bringeth forth the dead." (Isa. xxvi:19.) Was there ever painted or written a scene more beautiful than that? When the Sun of Righteousness shall rise upon you with healing in his wings, you shall arise and sing; for a dew of lights is Thy dew, O Jehovah.

The future life was reached through dark gates, but it was not a dark place. "Thy dew, O Jehovah, falling upon the dark graves throughout the earth, and bringing with it a new day and a new life, is a dew of lights."

GOD, MAN'S BEST PLEDGE OF IMMORTALITY.

"He is the Father. It is not said often enough; I fear it never will be. For it is not so much your misfortunes, poor, suffering humanity, as your false gods, that destroy you. Invite God to visit you and all the friendly powers, then those whom you weep will be with you."—*Charles Wagner*.

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"So long Thy power hath blest me, sure it still
Will lead me on."

—*John Henry Newman.*

Go from room to room of this great art gallery, and hunt out these almost forgotten etchings by Old Testament Masters.

The Hebrew prophets well knew that celestial splendors were about every child of God, here as well as yonder. They knew that God was near and His voice so kind that when a little innocent child heard it he thought it to be the voice of his best earthly friend. (1 Sam. iii.) They knew that every serving man, who honored the Lord, had a body guard of protecting angels about him, "horses of fire and chariots of fire." (2 Kings vi.) They knew that the inhabitants of the heavenly world were not far away, and that they were interested in every living friend of heaven's King.

Do you see that mountaineer pictured yonder? (2 Kings ii.) He has lived all his life where the wind blows keen from eternal snows, and he wears a mountain cloak upon his shoulders as he walks beside the river with his young friend. But as they pause a moment there is a flash above them, and a chariot stops at their side—a chariot so radi-

ant that it seems made of sunbeams—and Elijah, the poor mountaineer, is caught up into the mystic splendor of heaven—a heaven so near to earth that he can be here one moment and the next yonder; a heaven the journey to which is so comfortable that he does not need even to take his cloak with him as he goes! “God took him”—that was the thought of death among God’s ancient people.

Man belongs to God; therefore it is taken for granted that he will continue to live on with God, in heavenly blessedness, only “a little lower than the angels.” God created him, God preserves him, God takes him to himself. “I will ransom thee from the power of the grave. I will redeem thee from death. O Death, I will be thy plague; O grave, I will be thy destruction.” (Hosea xiii: 14.)

And because God takes these departing ones, and because they are “with God,” the ancient prophet when he sees flashes of light in the sky dares to believe that the glorified dead are living yonder, “shining with the brightness of the firmament and as the stars forever.”

II.

THE NEW TESTAMENT RENAISSANCE.

"Straightway I was ware
So weeping, how a mystic shape did move
Behind me, and drew me backward by the hair,
And a voice said in mastery, while I strove,
'Guess now who holds thee?' 'Death,' I said. But
then
The silver answer rang, 'Not Death, but Love.'"
—*Mrs. Browning.*

The Old Testament Seer never saw inside the gates of heaven. He never saw the place which Jesus went to prepare. He only beheld a bright light in the clouds, and that but seldom. These Old Testament pictures are dim and vague; there are a few bright flashes and a few surprises of color, but they are mostly etchings or mere outlines in gray and black; for these Oldest Masters lived before the Day-Star arose and the dawn appeared. It was not till Jesus came through that heaven's gate was left ajar. Life and immortality were brought to light by Him. The gates of pearl were never seen till after

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Jesus came. In trying to see Him, men saw them.

Before that, there was a "feeling after" God and heaven, but no vision. But on that day when Jesus came on His mission of salvation to this foreign world, and on the day when He returned in triumph, when the sons of God shouted for joy—with a gladder shout than when the foundations of the earth were laid—

"Lift up your heads, O ye gates;
Even lift them up, ye everlasting doors
That the King of glory may come in";

then by His coming and going a radiant path was made which has drawn the eyes of holy men ever since to the bright gates of heaven which have never been locked or closed since He opened them.

The Old Testament saints knew nothing about the Future Life and pretended to know nothing about it excepting that God was still there—still full of graciousness—still full of love for His people. This new thought of God—as One eternally merciful and gracious—was the best religious revelation the ancient Hebrews ever received; and it filled the whole world with a great hope even before Jesus came.

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Whether the best Persian and Greek teachings of immortality came directly from intercourse with the Hebrews, or whether the "God of the whole earth" was whispering this same blessed truth to other nations beside the Hebrews as they became spiritually able to grasp it, may remain a question; but it cannot be doubted that the Christian teaching of the New Testament is as high above the teaching of the Old Testament as the heaven is high above the earth. Even the words for the future life which the ancient Hebrews ordinarily used were not warm and full of happy meaning, but were dreary, almost dismal.

Sheol, in the land of the dead, was, according to the ordinary view of the people, a pit, a hollow, the land of dust, the Land of Silence. The *Sheol* existence was thought of as "heavy with chill and painful negations." It was only because the Hebrew faith threw the potentialities of God into the land of shades, that the great prophets rose to the sublime faith that if God were there all would be well—it could not stay chill and dark if God were there, and the man whom God took must find somewhere even in *Sheol* a place of peace and rest and brightness.

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But the new words for death and the future life in the New Testament are very different from those in the Old Testament. Each word seems an etching, giving in faint outline the new hope of the New Gospel.

A NEW PICTURE OF DEATH.

“‘Sleep soft, beloved!’ we sometimes say,
Who have no time to charm away
Sad dreams that through the eyelids creep;
But never doleful dream again
Shall break the happy slumber when
He giveth His beloved sleep.”

—*Mrs. Browning.*

“The year’s at the spring, and day’s at the morn;
Morning’s at seven; the hillside’s dew-pearled;
The lark’s on the wing, the snail’s on the thorn;
God’s in His heaven; all’s well with the world.”

—*Browning.*

For example, take that new word, “sleep.” I say new word; for, although—like the word “Father” for God—it had occasionally been used before, the meaning of the word had never reached the heart of mankind till Jesus whispered it. Jesus said of the little girl, “she is not dead but sleepeth”; thus making in plain and explicit words the difference between the old idea and the new idea of death.

There is not the least thought here of

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death as an eternal sleep. Only the heathen could ever have had such a notion. But the idea is again and again emphasized in the strongest way, that to awake from death is just as natural and easy as to awake from sleep, and that one comes from this sleep refreshed and vigorous and ready for the new day of immortality. It is sleep that

“Knits up the ravelled sleeve of care
Balm of hurt minds * * *
Chief nourisher in life's feast.”

Sleep is the best possible thing for the tired and sick body. If you look steadily into this new word for death, which Jesus himself originated and filled with meaning, you can see a tired man enter his house, throwing himself upon his couch, after a vexatious and weary day. His forehead is drawn with care, his eyes are heavy, he looks old and haggard and feels weak and spiritless, discouraged and disappointed, as he lies down upon his bed, shuts his eyes and enters the land of shadows.

But what a change in the companion picture! The sun is rising now, the hilltops are glorious. All the fresh new morning is filled with the rapturous melody of singing

birds and the man stirs on his bed and lifts himself and there is a new light in his eye, there is a new hope in his heart, a new strength has come to him, and he springs with joyful feet into the work of the new day.

It is sleep that has done this for him. *Jesus says that this is what death does for us.* It comes as sleep to tired men and tired women. The old idea of death is gone; there is no death any more, says Jesus. "I have abolished death."

Do you see him talking to the disciples about Lazarus? He is on his death bed, as we call it, and Jesus knows it, and yet says, "This sickness is not unto death; he is merely falling asleep." He said that in order to draw out the response, which is as true to-day as it was then, "If he sleep he shall do well." That is what Jesus wanted to teach them. There is no such thing as death. The man is sleeping simply, and everyone knows that sleep is a good thing. "If he sleep he shall do well." How often did Jesus have to repeat this easy lesson!

A little girl is dying. The father and mother bend over her weeping and the doctor's hand is on her pulse. Presently he

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says, "She is gone." They fold her hands and cry, "Dead! Dead! Dead!"

But who is this entering the room? It is Jesus. He looks with sympathetic eyes upon the sorrowing ones and says, "She is not dead. Listen to my new gospel; your daughter is not dead, she is sleeping." (Mark v: 39.)

They could not believe it till he proved it to them—some of us find it hard to believe even yet—and when they laughed him to scorn, for they knew that she was dead, he leaned over and whispered: *Talithá cumi*—"Wake up, rise up, little one"—and she awoke and went to her mother, and Jesus said, "Give her something to eat." Poor child, perhaps she had not been able to eat for weeks, but now she had had her sleep and sprang up from it refreshed and strong and full of buoyant young life. That is death, says Jesus. Death, the enemy, has now become sleep, the best friend of man.

There is no need of any night there, because after this blessed sleep we are never tired. (Rev. xxii: 5.) Blessed are the dead, for they never get tired! It is no labor any more to work, "they rest from their labors"; but their works follow them—"con-



THE RAISING OF JAIRUS' DAUGHTER—REMBRANDT
(Unfinished etching)

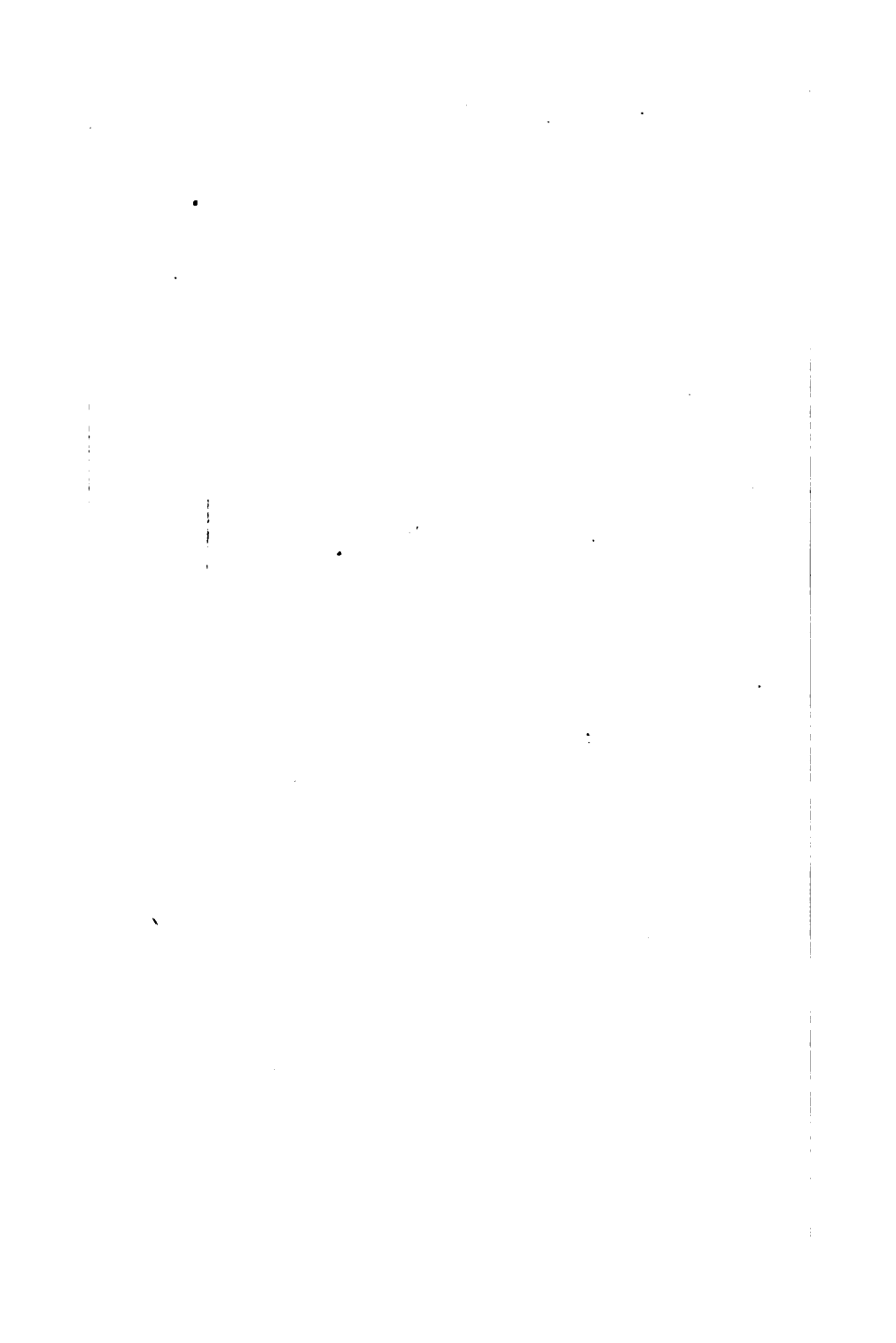
Every human etching of death and the resurrection must be dim, imperfect, fragmentary, unfinished.

"For now we see through a glass darkly."

St. Paul.

*"The best is yet to be,
The last of life, for which the first was made:
Our times are in His hand
Who saith, 'A whole I planned.'"*

Browning.



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tinue with them," as the original text says. (Rev. xiv: 13.) The best work of life must come after we are rested by sleep. It is sleep that makes a man able to do his best work, and Jesus said death was only a restful sleep.

The Old Testament prophets never reached that idea. Their loftiest thought was that of an awful struggle and possible conquest over a terrible enemy; but Jesus did not simply conquer the foe, He annihilated it, swallowed it up in victory, transformed the foe into a friend.

ANOTHER WORD-ETCHING.

"The Lord is my Victory and Song,
He also has become my Salvation.
Who is like unto Thee, O Lord,
Glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing
wonders?
In Thy Mercy Thou hast led forth the people
which Thou hast redeemed;
In Thy Might Thou hast guided them to thy holy
habitation;
The place, O Lord, which Thou hast made for
Thine own dwelling
The sanctuary, O Lord, which Thy hands have
established."

—*Song of Moses at the Exodus.*

Take another word for death. It is found

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in the account of the transfiguration. It is a new word, so new that it is used only twice in the New Testament (Luke ix: 31; 2 Peter i: 15), and both times with reference to this conversation when Jesus and His two heavenly visitors talked together of His "decease," (Gk. *exodus*.) What is the word? "Exodus!" That is not a translation but the very word they used. When Moses, who had led the children of Israel in the Exodus from Egypt, came down to earth to talk with Jesus about death he called it an Exodus!

Look into that word, and you see a picture of a slave race, whose lives are "made bitter with hard bondage, in mortar and in brick and in all manner of hard service in the field." This is the earthly life, according to Moses, where men are ever being forced to make bricks without straw. (Ex. i: 14; v: 7.)

Look again. There is a struggle now. Pharaoh never seemed so strong; the cry of Israel was never so loud; deliverance never seemed so far away. But now you see them gather and begin their journey over the desert with Moses as leader and they have jewels on their hands and songs of hope upon their lips. These slaves have grown rich and happy in a night. They enter the

dark sea, but find they can cross dry shod. They are over now. Behind them is a confused noise of chariot wheels dragging in the sand; before them is the Mount of God and the Promised Land of milk and honey and Miriam is playing on her timbrel and there is shouting and rejoicing for "The Exodus" is begun. That, according to Moses, and according to Jesus himself, is a picture of death, for they coined that word with which to express their thought of it.

If that is death what lies beyond it, Canaan? Nay, "a better country, that is a heavenly." To die, even while living in the earthly Canaan, "is gain." "To depart"—even though one be the chief Apostle favored with indescribable visions of glory and engaged in a life work great as that of an archangel—"is far better." Far better! I do not know all that this must mean, but must it not mean at least that if you count up all earthly honors, joys, beatitudes, privileges, liberties, possibilities—yonder you shall have "far better?" We are limited and restricted here like the slaves of Egypt. We shall be free in the Promised Land. The gates of the city are never shut; for there is perfect

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safety, perfect confidence, perfect purity, perfect liberty.

THE FUTURE LIFE AS PICTURED BY JESUS AND HIS NEAREST FRIENDS.

"Might we but hear
The hovering angels' high imagined chorus,
Or catch betimes with wakeful eyes and clear
One radiant vista of the realm before us—
With one rapt moment given to see and hear,
Ah, who would fear?"

—*Edmund Clarence Stedman.*

There shall be no more death, nor tears, nor poverty, "neither shall there be any more pain." (Rev. xxi:4.) Ah, look at that picture a minute. See this etching drawn by an inspired hand. The Christ who has abolished death will also abolish pain. He has not done that yet. It has been well said that Christianity is really the custodian of pain. Buddha told men that pain was a delusion. Some few foolish people believe with Buddha yet; but Christ always emphasizes its reality. He Himself was pre-eminent in suffering. The cross, the instrument of most fearful torture, He chose as His emblem and standard. He made the rule that the chiefest among the Christians should be he who bore

the heaviest cross, and followed most closely the Man of Sorrows.

To suffer the greatest privations and pain, "to die daily," this was the greatest record of honor. But the time is coming when there shall be no more pain. Pain will pass away as soon as the need for it passes away. As long as disease lasts—physical, mental, spiritual—it is desirable pain should last. The first earthly gift given to man after he left Paradise was the gift of sensitiveness to pain and therefore these words, "there shall be no more pain," is a picture in outline of a place where there shall be no disease; a place where there shall be no need of cultivating human sympathy, because every heart shall have been yielded to the universal power of love.

It is to be a place of liberty, too. "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God." (Rev. ii: 7.) Two pictures come before every one who reads these words.

We see the old Paradise in which grew the trees of life and of knowledge, and a man is stealthily snatching the forbidden fruit and hurrying away in shame, while the sword of

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Omnipotence guards the gate of Eden behind him.

But look again. In the new Paradise every restriction is removed. A man is at liberty to enjoy all the life—the abundant, abiding life—all that he is able to take; all that God is able to give.

THE LIFE.

"I came from God, and I'm going back to God, and I won't have any gaps of death in the middle of my life."—*George McDonald*.

"The hour draws near, howe'er delayed and late
When at the Eternal Gate
We leave the words and works we call our own,
And lift void hands alone
For love to fill. Our nakedness of soul
Brings to that gate no toll;
Giftless we come to Him, who all things gives
And live because He lives."

—*Whittier*.

Life! That is even the greatest thing the Future has to offer. It is suggestive that Jesus when He speaks of the Future does not speak of immortality, but of Life. That is the word He uses scores of times. Man is evermore dying in this world; he *lives* in the world eternal.

For the first time since the old Eden was lost man is really alive again and the poison

of death is out of his veins. He tastes now the freedom, the strength, the gladness, the ecstasy, the rapture of living. Jesus has loosed the travail pains of death (Acts 2:24); the new young immortal life has begun.

Our Lord so loved to emphasize this idea that Heaven was life that He has left us no paintings of the future world by His hand; and yet in a few of the drawings that He made, you see a little of His conception of the future life. For example, He has left several little etchings, which He Himself has entitled "The Kingdom of God." In these you see the grand triumph of Jehovah when all the potentates of the universe come to throw their crowns before Him, and in these pictures redeemed men are painted in king's garments and are seen having places of 'greatest honor nearest the white throne.

In one of these sketches a wedding day is represented in heaven. The King's Son is about to take His bride. You can almost hear the ringing of the wedding bells. The King is so majestic and glorious in His wedding robes of light that seraph and archangel veil their faces in awe and wondrous surprise. And the Bride whom the Prince of the Universe has chosen for His mate is redeemed

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humanity, and all the future eternity is pictured as a wedding feast! (Matt.xxii; Rev.xxi.)

According to Jesus there is no figure too sweet, too joyous, too beautiful to be used with reference to the future life. There is not a hope that burns in the breast of any ransomed saint bright enough or noble enough to equal the reality.

There is one little line of beauty preserved by St. John in one of these etchings, which seems never to be sufficiently appreciated. Jesus was trying to teach His disciples to trust God, and to show them that God would not disappoint those who did trust Him. Immediately in this connection the question of a future life arose, and whether men really had any right to expect the mansions in heaven for which they were so eagerly looking. And Jesus—He Who knew the truth and Who never shrank from overthrowing the false hopes of His disciples concerning earthly dignities—not only replied, "Yes, there are mansions in heaven," but added these words so crowded with ineffable suggestiveness, "If it were not so I would have told you."

These unconquerable hopes of the human heart are to be trusted. You have the author-

ity of Jesus for trusting them. If these were deceiving you Jesus would have told you.

He knew the truth and He knew that His disciples in the future life had vast expectations of "fullness of joy and pleasures forevermore," and He never said, "You are mistaken," and that is sufficient proof that God's children shall be satisfied with what awaits them. No redeemed soul can be disappointed with heaven. Our best dreams concerning our departed loved ones are being realized,—"If it were not so I would have told you," whispers the Master. They may have been surprised at heaven, but they have not been disappointed!

MANSIONS IN HEAVEN.

"Hush! oh, hush! for the Father hath fullness of
joy in store,
Treasures of power and wisdom and pleasures forevermore;
Blessing and honor and glory, endless, infinite
bliss;
Child of His love and His choice, oh, canst thou
not wait for this?"

—*Frances Ridley Havergal.*

Will there be mansions in heaven? "Certainly," answers Jesus, "many mansions." The ancient Chaldeans called the Zodiacal

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Constellations the "mansions" of the Sun and the Moon. Jesus knew that the whole universe was God's house and in that Father's House were many mansions. There are enough for all. We will not be crowded in heaven. There are "many mansions"; no doubt at least one for every saint.

Not a room simply. A recent writer has beautifully spoken of heaven as "the other room." But while that figure is allowable as expressing the nearness of heaven and the cozy feeling there, and especially as relieving us of the strange imagination that the act of departing from this earth will jolt and jar us out of our natural selves; yet in its definition of "mansions" it fails in expansiveness. This word "mansion" is too large and palatial to be represented by a room or any small and stingy suite of rooms. Heaven is not an apartment house with a narrow restricted "flat" for each family. These are palaces fit for the "heirs of God," which Jesus says await the saints in the world to come.

And as a last pledge that these mansions should just suit us, Jesus says, "I will go myself and prepare a place for you, a place such as I know you would like. That is why

I am leaving you. I go to prepare a place for you, to be ready for your coming."

"I go to prepare a place for you." We cannot know all that these words imply, but we can see that in the eyes of Jesus the mansions already prepared were not good enough for His special friends. The mansions already prepared would do for cherub and seraph and angel; but they had never won a crown of salvation. They had never fought side by side with King Jesus. When Lucifer revolted, a word from the King and he and all his followers fell headlong from heaven. They never heard that the King's Son was touched with the feeling of their infirmities. He never took the nature of angels. He never died for angels. And because we are of the nature He took and because He died for us we are to "judge angels"—He has gone to prepare a special place for us closer to the throne than angels can venture.

O think of it! He Who took our nature knows what would suit us best. He Who is the creator of the stars, the carpenter of Nazareth Who built the universe, the divine artisan, co-worker with God—Who in the beginning smote upon the anvil of His power and the sparks covered the sky and are burn-

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ing there yet—He it is, Who in the choicest spot of all the universe has saved a place where His most glorious palace shall be erected; there it is that He has gone “to prepare a place for you.” This world is not the best that the Creator can do as a world-maker. He will prepare us a better; and promises us the best place in that best world. He Himself says, in language which we would never have dared to use otherwise, “To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me upon my throne.” He affirms it. These are His own words written upon this marvellous picture of eternal dominion which was seen and described by the beloved disciple.

GOD'S GARDEN.

“It was a place

Chos'n by the Sovran Planter, when he fram'd

All things to Man's delightful use * * * *

A wilderness of sweets * * * *

* * * * enormous bliss.

Your bodies may at last turn all to spirit,

Improv'd by tract of time, and wing'd ascend

Ethereal, as we; or may, at choice,

Here or in heavenly Paradises dwell.”

—*Milton.*

“The loves that meet in Paradise shall cast out fear,
And Paradise hath room for you and me and all.”

—*Christina G. Rossetti.*

Jesus had little sympathy with people who imagined death to be a long continued sleep. Why, He Himself had received visitors on the Mount of Transfiguration from the heavenly world. Moses and Elias were not asleep; they were awake and fully conscious. The day of the general resurrection had not yet come; but they were able to talk and remember and sympathize and plan, just as of old, only better than of old.

So Jesus promised the penitent thief, "To-day thou shalt be with me in Paradise." To-day! Why, the day is nearly spent. To-day! Why, the journey then cannot be long.

Paradise! The very word means park. This of itself ought to prove that those mansions in heaven are not going to be crowded up into narrow streets with no room for flower gardens. Even the new home of the penitent thief is to front on the royal park. There is plenty of room in heaven. O you poor men who think you are rich because you own a few corner lots in a crowded town! He is the rich man who has a dwelling not made with hands in the Royal Park of heaven.

But we know more of this park; for this is the very name given to the Garden of De-

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light in which our first parents were placed. Thus when Jesus said, "This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise," a picture of that early Garden of Beauty was painted before the eyes of everyone who heard Him: a picture of cool streams and shade trees and well laden orchards and woods where many wild creatures are sporting; a land of riches, filled with gold and bdellium and the onyx stone; a place where knowledge comes easily as if plucked from the trees; a garden full of beauty and life, with the very Tree of Life in its center. Jesus, knowing the picture that the word paints, says, "To-day thou shalt be with me in Paradise"—the heavenly Eden!

Jesus thus opens the gates and challenges the loftiest human imagination to come in and take possession. Paint the best picture you can of the happiest hours of the best man and woman in the best place on earth that even God could prepare for them—and that is what awaits even the least deserving one that ever gets into heaven on the first day he enters it. That is not all of heaven. That is not all that even this penitent thief will see after a little; but this is the first sight; this is the beginning of an eternity, each era of which shall eclipse the last. St. Paul went a little

farther than this new convert could, and he saw the "third heaven," and heard unspeakable words, so full of splendid mystery, so full of glorious prophecy for all the eternities to come that even his inspired lips could not repeat them—we cannot bear them yet. St. Paul had a great vocabulary and he was mighty in letters, but when he was lifted up to the third heaven and came back all he could say about what he saw was "Unspeakable! Unutterable!"

All he ever did say was a little while after this, when he whispered something about being "clothed with immortality," and then he shouted a great shout because soon, very soon, he now hoped to be "at home with the Lord." (2 Cor. v:8.)

THE PERFECT HOME.

"Eye hath not seen it, my gentle boy!
 Ear hath not heard its deep songs of joy;
 Dreams cannot picture a world so fair—
 Sorrow and death may not enter there;
 Time doth not breathe on its fadeless bloom,
 Far beyond the clouds and beyond the tomb,
 It is there, it is there, my child.

—*Mrs. Hemans.*

"The solemn joy that soul-communion feels
 Immortal life reveals;

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And human love, its prophecy and sign
Interprets love divine."

—Whittier.

At home! At home! Let every man paint his own picture of home, and put into it all the freedom and sense of privacy and ownership, all the sweetness and sociability and loving tenderness which makes home, home—and heaven shall be that, or better than that, according to St. Paul. We merely hear the mention by St. Paul that there is a "third heaven," but we hear from another seer of a marvel of wonder beyond that—so gloriously surpassing it that it is called "the heaven of heavens." But even St. John in that rich painting of the Apocalypse, so full of radiant color, never ventures to show us anything but the outer wall and just a mere glimpse into the first heaven. But even the sight of the outer wall thrilled his soul; for its foundations were filled with precious jewels—with jasper and topaz and sapphires and emeralds and amethysts; while the great stones of which the walls were built were not marble but diamonds; and in its twelve gateways were twelve pearls, each gate a pearl. Beyond this the seer of Patmos saw streets paved with gold, clear as honey, luminous as

glass, a river of Water of Life, and trees with strange heavenly fruit; and he says the light from the city was "like unto stones most precious, even like jasper stone, clear as crystal."

THE INEXPRESSIBLE.

"Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp
Or what's a heaven for?"

—*Browning.*

"Although to-day He prunes my twigs with pain,
Yet doth His blood nourish and warm my root;
To-morrow I shall put forth buds again,
And clothe myself with fruit."

—*Christina G. Rossetti.*

Even the apostle John could not tell all about heaven; but he seized his brush and painted as well as he could what he saw, leaving to us a splendid vision of flashing landscape and crystal sea, and a white throne crowned with the rainbow of peace, surrounded with chanting choruses. Better than all, he saw some of the inhabitants. He saw angels and cherubs and a group of kings, every one with a crown upon his head, whom he calls "the Ancients" (A. V. "elders"), and others with far reaching, seraphic wings, having eyes which seemed to be everywhere, beaming with supernatural intelligence and

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vigilance—creatures so full of energy and activity that he calls them “the Living Ones” (A. V. “beasts”).

But of all the multiform population of heaven St. John was most attracted by a glorious company which stood very near the throne. The light about them was so brilliant, or they were so much nearer the King than those whom he had previously observed, that the apostle was not able to see clearly what these splendid creatures were who made such ravishing music and were so especially honored. But one of the Ancients who did not want this visitor to leave heaven without seeing the best it had to show, told him to look closer, and when, even yet, he was unable to recognize to what angelic order these splendid forms belonged, this Ancient One—who was glad of the honor of witnessing to the power of the cross—astonished him by telling him that these were redeemed men who had washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb; “therefore are they before the throne of God, and He that sitteth on the throne dwells among them.” (Rev. vii: 15.)

THE KING IN HIS BEAUTY.

"Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty."
—*Is.*, 33: 17.

"I shall be satisfied when I awake with Thy likeness."—*Ps.*, 17: 15.

"And while we all with unveiled face behold as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, we are transformed into that same image from glory to glory."
—*II Cor.*, 3: 18.

"We shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is."—*I John*, 3: 2.

One greater surprise came to this artist, this only earthly visitor to the New Jerusalem. His guide showed such vast knowledge of heavenly things, and had received such honor from the angelic bands which they had met, and, withal, looked so supremely glorious, that presently the soul of the beloved disciple was filled with the thought that his guide was no less a personage than Jesus Himself, and as the thought came to him and as he looked at his companion more closely he became certain that it was indeed the Master who was again walking and talking with him—and he "fell at his feet to worship him." But quickly was he lifted to his feet. "See thou do it not; for I am a fellow servant with thee and with thy brethren." (*Rev.* xix: 10.)

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O the marvel of it, if one of these early Christians after only a short residence in the Father's House has grown so closely to resemble the divine Christ that even the beloved disciple was ready to worship him. What a prophecy of hope to every believer in Jesus!

"WE SHALL BE CHANGED."

"Think, when our one soul understands
The great Word which makes all things new,
When earth breaks up and heaven expands
How will the change strike me and you
In the house not made with hands?"

—*Browning.*

Many other pictures of the Future World may be found in the Royal Gallery, but we will only speak of one other little delicate divine etching of death and heaven drawn by the pierced hands of Jesus, Himself.

I am afraid it has been so covered up by theological overwritings that it has not been admired and studied as it ought to be. On one side is a poor man lying on the hard earth or the cold stones of a courtyard, dying. He has no home; he has no friends except the snarling dogs of the street. His only food for days has been the crumbs which

he has snatched from them. He is hungry and cold and lonely; the sound of the music and feasting that comes to him from the palace close by only makes him feel more hungry and cold and lonely. He is dying now, and there is no one near him to hear his dying groan, or wipe the death-sweat from his brow.

O, if—if one of the servants would but come just a moment or two. He hears a wagon in the distance and shudders, for tomorrow the death cart will rattle over the stones and he will be picked up and carted out to a pauper's grave or put in the potter's field where executed criminals are buried. And yet he has tried to do right, and tried to trust God. How strange it is that now he must die alone, and start on the long, cold journey through the unknown shadows alone.

But what is that? Listen! Somehow he has never heard such music as that all the days he has lain near Dives' palace. It sounds like the music some shepherds said they heard once as they watched their flocks near Bethlehem. And now comes the rushing of swift wings, and as the dying man opens his eyes for the last time he sees friends

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all about him, and these friends with angelic faces lift him up in their comforting, sympathetic arms, and carry him out from Dives' courtyard, and he is not afraid to go with them and he is not lonely any more.

If it had been Moses and Isaiah that had been cared for that tenderly, or some other great saint of God, I might not have thought so much of it, but if heaven can afford such a guard of honor to this poor pauper dying on the streets, who was not one of the disciples, who never did anything worthy of being recorded by the inspired pen except to live right and die right, then we may hope that no little one in all the Father's family will ever be forgotten, or will be left to die alone or to take the long journey into the land of shadows alone.

Ah, but look at the other part of the picture, and we will never again talk about a long journey, or about the land of shadows at the end of it. Where did the angels carry him? Thank God, Jesus Himself, in this same picture, shows us that. We see an evening gathering in a palace brilliant with lights—Dives never saw a palace such as that—and a feast is spread in the banquet hall, and angels are the servants at the table, and the

